

Thank You, Mr. Nixon by Gish Jen

This collection of short stories starts in 1972 when President Nixon and the First Lady visited the Great Wall in China, and then goes through the next fifty years.

In 1972, President Nixon visited China. That historic moment opened China to the world, ushering in a new age of tourism, commerce, and wealth. The door wasn't unguarded however, as the ideas coming in were carefully monitored, as were the experiences provided for the tourists arriving in China.

The first chapter is written by Trisha, as a letter to President Nixon from her home in heaven to his residency in hell. She writes of being a young girl at the park, seeing the President and First Lady. She knows all the staging that happened previous to their visit, to provide just the right setting for the world's first glimpse into China. The rest of the short stories in this book are from the perspectives of different characters, but they all relate back to Trisha in some way.